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State of Mississippi

State Benefits for Mississippi

Veterans, Dependents and Survivors

Compiled By The
Mississippi State Veterans Affairs Board
2008

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MISSISSIPPI VETERANS AFFAIRS BOARD

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In 1924 the Mississippi Legislature recognized that World War I veterans needed assistance to obtain veterans' benefits, this resulted in legislation which created and funded the office of State Service Commissioner. The duties and functions of this office were to aid all residents of Mississippi who served in the military forces of the United States during any war and their dependents and beneficiaries so that they would receive all benefits to which they were entitled under the laws of the United States.

The State Service Commissioner's office was not adequately staffed to provide the level of casework assistance necessary for the five-fold increase in the population of veterans brought on by World War II. In 1948, the Legislature changed the State Service Commission to the State Veterans Affairs Board (SVAB) in order to provide additional manpower and assistance for the increasing number of veterans and dependents.

The State Veterans Affairs Board is charged with assisting former and current members of the Armed Forces of the United States and their dependents in securing any benefits or privileges to which they are entitled, with establishment and operation of a State Veterans Memorial Cemetery, with operation of the four Mississippi State Veterans Nursing Homes, with approval of programs and institutions of education and training under the GI Bill, and with advising the governor and legislature on veterans' affairs.

State Veterans Affairs Board

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Post Office Box 5947

3466 Hwy 80 East

Pearl, MS 39288

Phone: (601) 576-4850 or 1-877-203-5632

Fax: (601) 576-4868

Email: agrice@vab.ms.gov

SVAB stores copies of military discharges (DD 214) for individuals recently released from military service who list Mississippi as their home of record on the DD 214. SVAB can access Mississippi Draft cards from WW II through post Korea and can access some records pertaining to World War II and Korean War discharges. SVAB provides speakers for meetings and works closely with the legislature, governor and veterans organizations regarding veterans issues.

State Veterans Claims Division

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1600 East Woodrow Wilson Ave.

Room 116

Jackson, MS 39216
Phone: (601) 364-7182, 7183, 7184, 7180
Fax: (601) 364-7226
Email: bmartin@vab.ms.gov

Claims Division veterans service officers provide free advice and guidance to veterans and dependents concerning VA claims, VA casework, hearings, appeals, and discharge upgrades. These service officers are also responsible for the training of county veterans service officers. Claims Division employees represent the Mississippi State Veterans Affairs Board and are accredited representatives for the American Legion, American Red Cross, Blinded Veterans Association, Fleet Reserve Association, Non Commissioned Officers Association, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

State VA Hospital Service Offices

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Biloxi VA Hospital Building 54, Room 116B 400 Veterans Ave. Biloxi, MS 39531 Phone: (228) 523-5253 Email: adminvab@vab.ms.gov	Jackson VA Hospital Room D 118 1500 E. Woodrow Wilson Dr. Jackson, MS 39216 Phone: (601) 364-1451 Email: adminvaj@vab.ms.gov
Memphis VA Hospital Room CEO 205 1030 Jefferson Ave. Memphis, TN 38104 Phone: (901) 523-8990 ext.5140 Email: adminvam@vab.ms.gov	

State VA Hospital Service Officers provide free advice and guidance to veterans and dependents with VA claims, with VA medical care and treatment problems, hospitalization and nursing home placement issues. Our hospital service officers provide free representation to veterans on issues of disagreement and at personal hearings held in the VA Hospitals in Biloxi, Jackson and Memphis.

State Veterans Nursing Homes

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State Veterans Home	State Veterans Home
3261 Hwy 49	4607 Lindberg Dr.
Collins, MS 39428	Jackson, MS 39209
Phone: (601) 765-0403	Phone: (601) 354-7205
Email: adminch@vab.ms.gov	Email: adminjh@vab.ms.gov
State Veterans Home	State Veterans Home
310 Autumn Ridge Dr.	120 Veterans Blvd.
Kosciusko, MS 39090	Oxford, MS 38655
Phone: (662) 289-7044	Phone: (662) 236-7641
Email: adminkh@vab.ms.gov	Email: adminoh@vab.ms.gov

Each of the four State Veterans Nursing Homes have 150 beds and provide skilled nursing home care for eligible veterans and spouses. Eligibility for admission requires that the former serviceman/woman be or have been a Mississippi resident, have qualifying military service, have a "good" military discharge, or be the spouse of a veteran who resides in one of the Veterans Homes. Out of state veterans may be admitted to the Homes if there are no Mississippi residents waiting to accept a bed. Applicants must have a medical need for nursing home care and must be able to pay the daily charge for care in the Home which is subject to change. Applications for admission to the State Veterans Homes may be obtained from any of our offices, from many hospital social work departments and from county veterans service officers. Indigent veterans may request assistance with the expense of care in the facilities.

State Approving Agency Division

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3466 Highway 80 East
P.O. Box 5947
Pearl, Mississippi 39208
Phone: (601)576-4867
Fax: (601) 576-4868
Email: adminsaa@vab.ms.gov

Have you ever considered using your GI Bill benefits for On-the-Job training or Apprenticeship training? Many veterans are not aware that they can use their GI Bill benefits for OJT or Apprenticeship training with most establishments. With the use of either program, you will earn wages, as well as receive your GI Bill benefits, if you're eligible. Furthermore, the State Approving Agency inspects and approves programs of education and training at universities, colleges, vo-tech schools, flight schools, on-the-job training programs, etc., for GI Bill educational or training eligibility.

If you have questions concerning a school or training program being approved to teach or train veterans under the GI Bill, please contact the State Approving Agency.

[Approved Schools and Establishments for Veterans Training](#)

Mississippi State Veterans Memorial Cemetery

Newton County

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Mississippi State University Coastal Plains Experiment Station provided seventy five acres of beautiful rolling pasture land located between Newton and Hickory, MS, along and south of Interstate 20 to establish a State Veterans Memorial Cemetery. The legislature provided \$700,000 for planning and development and SVAB applied for a federal State Veterans Cemetery construction grant which, if approved, will provide 100% of the funding to construct and equip the cemetery. If all requirements are met and the construction grant is approved VA projects that federal grant funding should be available in early 2009 to start construction with completion in early 2010.

Email: cemetery@vab.ms.gov

Federal Department of Veterans Affairs Facilities

Serving Mississippi

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Detailed information concerning federal veterans benefits, applications, VA facilities and VA forms can be found on the Department of Veterans Affairs website www.va.gov

VA Medical Centers

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(North MS)	(Central MS)	(South MS)
VA Medical Center	VA Medical Center	VA Medical
1030 Jefferson Ave.	1500 E. Woodrow	Center
Memphis, TN,	Wilson Dr.	400 Veterans Ave.
38104	Jackson, MS 39216	Biloxi, MS 39531
901-523-8990	601-364-7900	228-523-5000

VA Regional Office

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1600 E. Woodrow
Wilson Ave.
Jackson, MS 39216
1-800-827-1000

VA National Cemeteries

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National Cemetery	National Cemetery	National Cemetery
1551 Horton St.	41 Cemetery Rd.	400 Veterans Ave.
Corinth, MS 38834	Natchez, MS 39120	Biloxi, MS 39535
901-386-8311	601-445-4981	228-388-6668

National Personnel Records Center

Military Personnel Records

9700 Page Blvd.
St. Louis, MS 63132-5100
314-801-0800

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Detailed information and applications concerning replacement of lost or destroyed military medals, ribbons, decorations, military discharges, reports of separation, DD 214's, military personnel records and military medical records can be found on the National Personnel Records Center's web site www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/index.html

VA & SBA Small Business Assistance

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The federal government has set aside contract programs for qualified veterans and small business loan programs. For information concerning these programs go to www.vetbiz.gov, telephone 1-866-584-2344 or contact the National Veteran-Owned Business Association at www.navoba.com/toolbox.

VA Burial Benefits

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Funeral home directors or their employees usually assist surviving family members in applying for U.S. burial flags, VA burial allowances, VA plot allowances, VA headstones or grave markers and they make arrangements for military funerals. Applications for burial benefits can be found on the VA website www.va.gov

MISSISSIPPI VETERANS HOME PURCHASE BOARD

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P.O. Box 54411
3466 Highway 80 East
Pearl, MS 39288
(601) 576-4800
<http://www.vhpb.state.ms.us/>

The Veterans' Home Purchase Board provides low interest rate mortgage loans in amounts up to \$195,000 for eligible veterans and eligible unmarried surviving widows to purchase an existing single family home or to pay off a construction loan on a home recently constructed. Eligibility requires that the veteran be a Mississippi resident prior to entering military service or be a resident for two consecutive years immediately preceding the loan application. The veteran must have or obtain a Certificate of Eligibility for Home Loan Guaranty from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) and be discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Military veterans, active duty members, and current members of the Mississippi National Guard or Reserves with over six years service are eligible to apply.

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT of ARCHIVES and HISTORY

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200 North Street
Post Office Box 571
Jackson, MS 39205
Phone: (601) 576-6850
<http://www.mdah.state.ms.us/>

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History maintains historical records and a reference library concerning Mississippi residents and units which served during the Civil War, the Spanish American War and World War I, World War II and the Korean War.

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

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1235 Echelon Parkway
Post Office Box 1699
Jackson, MS 39213
Phone: (601) 321-6000
<http://www.mdes.ms.gov/>

Veterans seeking assistance regarding employment or unemployment insurance benefits should contact the Mississippi Department of Employment Security for assistance. MS Employment Security offices and WIN Centers are located in many areas of the state and should be listed in your local telephone book.

MISSISSIPPI STATE PERSONNEL BOARD

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301 North Lamar St.
Suite 203
Jackson, MS 39201
Phone: (601) 359-1406
<http://www.mspb.ms.gov/>

Applications for state employment are processed by the State Personnel Board (SPB). SPB's web site lists state jobs which are on recruitment and for which they are accepting applications. The SPB web site also provides job descriptions and minimum qualifications for the positions on recruitment.

MISSISSIPPI MILITARY DEPARTMENT (Army and Air National Guard)

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1410 Riverside Dr.
P. O. Box 5027
Jackson, MS 39296-5027
Phone: (601) 313-6232/6233
<http://www.ngms.state.ms.us/>

The Mississippi Military Department maintains personnel and military discharge records for members of the Mississippi Army and Air National Guard and has transition assistance,

educational and financial assistance programs for its members as follows:

Support to state employees- 15 working days of paid military leave;

Educational benefits- Education assistance program pays tuition up to \$250 per hour, maximum \$4,500 per year for eligible NG members to obtain Associates and Bachelors degrees and in-state tuition rates for non-resident NG members;

Family Support- Created the Mississippi Military Family Relief Fund to make grants available to families that have experienced financial difficulties due to a family member from the Guard and Reserves being called to active duty; a Mississippi resident may designate any portion of their tax refund for deposit into the relief fund. Information available at [http://www.ngms.state.ms.us/state family support/](http://www.ngms.state.ms.us/state_family_support/);

Tax and financial benefits- \$15,000 state income tax exemption for NG and Reserve pay (from federal or state duty);

Licensing, registration and fees- Extension of professional license NG and Reserve until 90 days after returning from federal active duty.

COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

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The majority of counties in Mississippi employ a County Veteran Service Officer who is to assist county residents with VA claims. County Veteran Service Officers can answer questions concerning applying for VA benefits, they can contact the VA for claim status, assist in completing paperwork and provide advice and assistance to veterans and dependents. County Veterans Service Officers are required to attend training courses each year and they are required to pass an annual test concerning VA benefits.

Mississippi law requires that a County Veterans Service Officer be an honorably discharged veteran with wartime or police action military service or be the surviving spouse or child of such veteran. The following is a listing of County Veterans Service Officers by county. The list is subject to change. Contact the Chancery Clerk or Board of Supervisors office in your county for additional information.

[County Veteran Service Officer list](#) (pdf 109kb)

Mississippi Laws Concerning Veterans Benefits

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County Veterans Service Officers

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Counties may employ a County Veterans Service Officer who shall be (a) honorably discharged or honorably released veteran of any war or police action in which the Armed Forces of the United States have been, are or shall be committed for action; (b) the surviving spouse or child of any such deceased veteran; or (c) any person employed as a County Veterans Service Officer in any county of the State of Mississippi on March 30, 1990.

County Veterans Service Officers must be certified by the Mississippi State Veterans Affairs Board which requires that they (a) attend at least one (1) of the two (2) annual training programs provided each year and successfully complete a written examination each year on the duties and responsibilities of and assistance available to such officers and veterans. No County Veterans Service Officer shall be entitled to any compensation for their service unless they are annually certified by the State Veterans Affairs Board. 35-3-21

Property Ad Valorem Tax

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Service-connected, totally disabled (100%) American veterans who were honorably discharged from military service are exempt from all ad valorem taxes on homesteads of \$7,500.00 or less in assessed value. 27-33-67

Documents

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The Mississippi Dept. Of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics is to furnish, without charge, copies of birth and death certificates when they are needed to establish claims for dependency, disability, or survivors benefits for any veterans who are legal residents of the State of Mississippi or their claimants. 35-3-9

The State Bureau of Vital Statistics is to furnish, at no expense, and immediately upon application a certified copy of birth certificates for any person volunteering for service in one of the armed forces of the United States. 41-57-25

Chancery and Circuit Clerks are to furnish, without charge, copies of marriage licenses, divorce decrees, adoption decrees and any and all other records when the same are needed to establish

claims for dependency, disability or survivors benefits for any veterans who are legal residents of the State of Mississippi or their claimants. 35-3-11

Chancery Clerks shall record, without cost whatsoever to any person of the Armed Forces of the United States residing in the same county, all honorable discharges and all certificates of service of any and all members of the Armed Forces of the United States. Certified copies will be furnished free without cost to the soldier, sailor, marine, coast guardsman, or nurse. 35-3-13

Educational Assistance

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Children of any member of the armed services whose official home of record and residence is within the State of Mississippi and who is officially reported as being either a prisoner of war or missing in action can receive an eight-semester scholarship, without cost, exclusive of books, food, school supplies, materials and dues or fees for extracurricular activities at any state supported college or university within the State. 37-108-1

The Adjutant General of Mississippi is authorized to pay the tuition for certain members of the active Mississippi National Guard who are enrolled within the State of Mississippi in an accredited institution of higher learning, vocational education school or junior college. 33-7-405 & 33-7-407

Military personnel stationed in Mississippi are classified as state residents for the purposes of payment of tuition at state colleges and universities. 37-103-17

Hunting and Fishing Licenses

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Veterans who have a total service-connected disability from the Veterans Administration are not required to purchase a hunting or fishing license, but must have on their person proof of age, residency and disability status while engaged in hunting or fishing. 49-7-5

Employment Preference

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The State Personnel Board grants each veteran who is fully qualified preference over other applicants for initial or promotional appointments (5 points). Disabled veterans are given additional preference (10 points). 25-9-303

In state layoffs, veterans are granted preference and additional preference is given disabled veterans. 25-9-303

Privilege Tax

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Persons who are 65 or older, blind, deaf, dumb, or with loss of hand or foot, or loss of use of the hand or foot or who can provide documentation that they are 50% disabled to perform physical labor and whose annual gross income is \$900.00 or less are exempt from payment of privilege tax for specified businesses. 27-15-227

State Retirement

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Members of the State Public Employees Retirement System who served in the Armed Forces of the United States or who served in Maritime Service (Merchant Marine) during periods of hostility in WWII shall be entitled to up to four (4) years credit for active duty in the Armed Forces or in such Maritime Service, provided they entered State Service after discharge from the Armed Forces or after completion of such Maritime Service. Credit may be extended beyond four (4) years for those persons who can provide positive proof that they were retained in the Armed Forces or such Maritime Service during WWII by causes beyond his control and without opportunity for discharge. 25-11-109

Re-employment

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Any person who is a member of any reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States who, in order to perform duties or receive training with the Armed Forces of the United States or of the State of Mississippi leaves a position, other than a temporary position, in the employ of any employer, and who shall give evidence of the satisfactory completion of such duty or training, and who is still qualified to perform the duties of such position, shall be entitled to be restored to his previous or a similar position, in the same status, pay, and seniority. Such period of absence for military duty or training shall be construed as an absence with leave but may be without pay. 33-1-19

Motor Vehicle License Plates

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Photos of Veteran and Military license plates can be viewed on the MS State Tax Commission web site <http://www.dor.ms.gov>. Once you enter the State Tax Commission website click on Tags & Titles on the right side of the page. When that opens click on Tags, Motor Vehicle Licensing. After that opens click on Available License Plates and scroll down the tag list and click on the tag you wish to view.

HONORING VETERANS

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The owner of any passenger vehicle, pickup truck or noncommercial motor vehicle can purchase the patriotic Honoring Veterans license plate which proudly displays the United States Flag. This license plate costs an additional \$31.00 over regular license plate fees. \$24.00 of that fee goes to support indigent veterans residing the State Veterans Nursing Homes and the State Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

VETERAN

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In recognition of the patriotic service rendered by Mississippians who are honorably discharged veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces, any such person is privileged to obtain distinctive motor vehicle license plates or tags for each motor vehicle registered in his name identifying his status as a veteran. In addition, decals indicating branch and period of military service are to be affixed to the license tags. An additional annual tag fee of Thirty Dollars (\$30.00) shall be collected for such license plates for the benefit of indigent veterans who are residents of the State Veterans Nursing Homes.

CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR

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Any legal resident of the State of Mississippi, who is a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor and the unmarried surviving spouse of such person is privileged to obtain annually, one (1) motor vehicle license plate or tag for a private passenger motor vehicle or pickup truck in the county of his residence. The CMH license plate or tag is exempt from all motor vehicle registration fees and privilege taxes.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERAN

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Any legal veteran resident of the State of Mississippi with a 100% permanent service-connected disability rating by the Veterans Administration and the unmarried surviving spouse of such person is privileged to purchase annually one (1) motor vehicle license plate or tag for a private passenger motor vehicle or pickup truck in his or her county of residence for the sum of one dollar (\$1.00) in total cost.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS & AIR MEDAL

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Veterans who were awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross or Air Medal while in military service may purchase a special license plate recognizing that award. The applicant must present satisfactory proof of award of the medal and pay an additional \$30 tag fee.

EX-PRISONER OF WAR

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Any legal resident of the State of Mississippi who was a prisoner of war and the unmarried surviving spouse of such person is privileged to obtain annually one (1) motor vehicle license plate or tag for a private passenger vehicle or pickup truck in the county of his or her residence. The EX-POW license plate or tag is exempt from all motor vehicle registration fees and privilege taxes.

KILLED ON ACTIVE DUTY

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Any legal resident of the State of Mississippi who is the un-remarried surviving spouse of a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, a reserve component of the Armed Forces or of the National Guard, who, while on active duty, is killed or dies in time of war or national emergency declared by the President of the United States, or in an area determined by the Secretary of Defense to be of immediate military hazard, is privileged to purchase annually, one (1) motor vehicle license plate or tag for a private passenger vehicle or pickup truck in the county of his or her legal residence, for the sum of Two Dollars (\$2.00 in total cost. The KIA license plate or tag is exempt from all privilege taxes.

PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR

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Any resident of the State of Mississippi who is an honorably discharged former member of one of the Armed Forces of the United States and while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States was present during the attack on the island of Oahu, Territory of Hawaii, on December 7, 1941, between the hours of 7:55 a.m. and 9:45 a.m., Hawaii time, is privileged to obtain one (1) distinctive motor vehicle license plate or tag for an additional tag fee of fifteen dollars (\$15.00) for use on a private passenger vehicle (to include station wagons, recreational motor vehicles and pickup trucks) in the county of his or her legal residence.

PURPLE HEART

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Any resident of the State of Mississippi who is an honorably discharged former member of one of the Armed Forces of the United States who can provide written proof that while serving in the Armed Forces of the United State he or she was awarded the Purple Heart Medal is privileged to obtain one free distinctive license plate or tag for use on a private passenger vehicle (to include station wagons, recreational motor vehicles and pickup trucks) in the county of his or her legal residence.

The unmarried surviving spouse of a deceased person who was issued a Purple Heart Medal license plate or tag may apply for or retain one (1) such license plate or tag which shall be exempt from taxes and fees.

RESERVE, NATIONAL GUARD, MERCHANT MARINE, RETIRED

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Reserve, National Guard, Merchant Marine, Retired- any resident of the State of Mississippi who has completed an active duty career with the Armed Forces of the United States and active duty and retired members of the Army National Guard, Air National Guard, United States Reserves and those United States Merchant Marines in maritime service during the period from December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945, and their surviving spouses may be issued distinctive motor vehicle license plate or tag at no additional cost in the county of his or her legal residence.

SILVER STAR OR BRONZE STAR MEDAL

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Veterans who were awarded the Silver Star or Bronze Star while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States may purchase a special license plate recognizing that award. The applicant must present official written proof of the award of the medal and pay an additional \$30 tag fee, \$24 of which benefits indigent veterans residing in the State Veterans Nursing Homes.

Laws Passed During the 2007 Legislative Session

House Bill 617 authorized the State Adjutant General to pay tuition, room and board expenses for active military members of the MS National Guard participating in officer producing programs.

House Bill 1076 exempted Mississippi resident military personnel on leave from duty in the Global War On Terror from the requirement to have a valid hunting and fishing license.

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OTHER RESOURCES

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